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Risk Management Strategies in School Development and the Effect of Policies on Tolerance Education

Behcet Öznacar

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Abstract

Safety schools gain their quality of management by setting up strategies for risk management. The nature of safety schools relies on culture, management, and psychological guidance. In this respect, schools have intensified the need to concentrate on strategic planning for making school managements in quality context. The key term in quality for the school management is to focus on risk management. Risk management covers the potential pitfalls before facing threats. Therefore, strategy and policy establishment are important for managing the risks. In the first step, monitoring risks and examining opportunities and weaknesses are the major attempts to reach out quality. This research encapsulates examination of risk management in schools and current strategies and policies for the risks in the school cultures within qualitative nature. Experiences of headmasters and vice headmasters were gathered through interview. Thematic analysis was conducted to examine themes: culture of schools, strategy and policy of schools, and risk management. Research results revealed that headmasters and vice headmasters are aware of risk management. Schools are not enough to practice policies and strategies for establishing a school culture. It is seen that school culture and quality can be empowered through setting risk management and setting further policies and strategies.

Keywords: risk, management, strategies, tolerance, education

1. Introduction

Safe schools develop risk management strategies and raise management quality. The nature of such schools is dependent on culture, management, and psychological guidance. In this respect, schools have to focus on strategical plans for quality management. For a school management, the basic terminology of quality focuses on risk management, which includes potential traps without facing threats. Therefore, forming strategies and policies is of crucial importance for

risk management. As a first step, observation of risks and specifying weaknesses and strengths are great efforts in reaching quality. This research investigates risk management and valid strategies and policies for risks in school culture. School culture is the mirror of a school, and risk management is a procedure to facilitate school performance. A qualitative quality was used in this research. In order to define the policies and strategies of risk management, directors and assistant directors were interviewed. A thematic analysis was done to examine themes: school culture, school strategies, school policies, and risk management.

2. Risk management strategies and policies

Developing technology and growing school population yield several risk factors for students in schools. These factors are psychological worries, bad and imaginary environment, technology, and inclination to violence. Violence is a concept that individuals face in every phase of their life, and this is adapted by everybody. The universality of violence emerges from the harm it gives to individuals and the community [2]. Students, who adapt violence, tend to make it a way of taking pleasure in later phases of their lives. Satan [15] found out in a research that the widespread “violence” concepts in schools have become a way of protecting oneself physically and emotionally. Olweus [7], an expert on violence among peer students, defines violence as *“a repeated exhibition of the same negative behaviors of one or more students.”*

In a published study by Tatlıoğlu [17], it was stated that adolescent and young students have an inclination to solve problems with others by violence; they believe to be more effective, instead of talking to each other. At this point, the most crucial reason for inclination to apply “violence” rather than violence itself and why they see this the only way to solve problems. According to Tatlıoğlu, a big majority of teachers assumed that “violence” is a reflection from families. Children receiving violence from their families tend to see it as a first step to solve their problems and can only be controlled by violence [4].

Besides physical violence, another danger for the students taught by technology is “cyber violence.” The use of technology without the required education and equipment will give more harm than benefit. It is obvious that, besides its benefits, Information Technology (IT), at this point, brings along various worries. For example, individuals meet others at imaginary environments without knowing each other well and thus find themselves open to some threats; their interest in their school and lessons decreases due to frequent use of the technology; they direct their attention to other issues; they adapt different styles of communication, which weaken their actual socialization; and they share personal information and privacy.

Violence in schools can be in the forms of swearing at others, giving physical harm; threatening other individuals, being tough toward others and trying to be dominant on them by pushing, hitting, and fighting; threatening someone by toy guns, abusing, harming with a knife, or taking alcohol and forcing others to attend classes [5].

It has been concluded in Peker’s [14] published research that a big number of the participant students have faced “cyber violence.” In addition, the number of students applying “cyber violence” is lower. However, even the less number is a threatening picture for the future. It

is very likely that individuals inclined to such behavior, starting at a young age, begin to get pleasure in it and enjoy behaving that way. The findings of the study showed that “cyber violence” is a risk factor in the environment where socialization becomes difficult and lessens, which creates more “cyber bullying” with more “cyber violence” parties. Another significant result of this study is that domination on gender and the use of the Internet is a risk factor.

It should not be forgotten that besides the worries emerging from human beings, there are natural risks as well. The geographical conditions of the location of schools, the natural sources, and threats around should be well known, and plans should be made accordingly. Because the origin and size of natural and human-oriented dangers and threats cannot be foreseen in advance, protective and preventive measures need to be taken to minimize any harms, and in the case of school involvement in any incident, it should be intervened in the fastest and the most correct way.

The main aim of the plans made to fight natural disasters should be to foresee the possible catastrophe and risks before such disasters happen and handle any harm or minimize its effects or, if possible, be ready to lessen the risks of the disaster. In addition, being aware of what should be done, rescue and first-aid needs should be faced during the disaster. Even more, it is of utmost importance that fast decisions are made to fight the disaster on the spot and in time. Following this, plans and strategies should be set and applied in the possible shortest period of time to start to turn back to the normal operation of the school.

In their study, Özmen et al. [10] examined the subject question and found out that Turkey and other countries have developed sound action plans and programs to fight the risks of natural disasters. Plans and programs related to this issue should be overviewed and developed according to climate conditions. In this respect, not only schools and the Ministry of Education but also the Civilian Defense and Security units should work in a supportive collaboration.

Parallel to rising education levels, both teachers and students are in a position to face risks in different types and dimensions. Students, after a certain education level, have the worries about where to pursue their carriers and what steps they should follow. The big number of individuals with such worries indicates a failure in reaching the aims of education, and this creates uncertainty in terms of the quality of education and the aims expected to be achieved. Making sound career plans and implementing them, in the first place, will contribute to the students in achieving their aims, will increase their interest in their studies, and as a result, the schools will achieve their basic targets in providing the students with the necessary knowledge and technical skills to do their job.

Carrier plans have specific aims and processes. They help students reach their career aims and develop their technical knowledge and skills. They also help students receive a good education, satisfy and equip them to carry out their jobs willingly. A well-planned education system, including all the requirements, will guide the students have a more concrete look into their career plans and will follow a better way for their benefit. As in planning careers, students’ aims shape their targets and the point they want to reach [11].

Career counseling is a system in educational institutions that every individual needs from early to later ages in every field. From the early and the following school years, students start

to direct themselves to specific job opportunities through developing their skills. However, if they lack necessary guidance or a system or teaching staff to help them develop their skills, they will be disappointed and have obstacles in fulfilling their aims. This, in the end, will turn into a risk in the individuals proving his/her skills and abilities. Educational managers, individuals carrying out guidance and counseling tasks, and other teaching staff have significant roles in career planning. The help the teaching staff provide is totally connected to the students willing to benefit from it [19].

In the process of career planning, there should be certain professional paths to be followed to make it more active and responding. One of these paths, “Mentoring” can be shown as an example. Mentoring, according to Galileo, is a system, which helps individuals show their potentials. Maximum outcome can be obtained from students through this system and the students get more pleasure and become more interested in their courses and learning processes. This, obviously, will eradicate all negative attitudes by the students towards school and possible risks resulting from inconveniences that may emerge. When the origin of “mentoring” is examined, it can be seen that it refers to preparing an individual for the future in a correct way. Many years ago, the “Mentor” was assigned a task to educate and inform Telemachus’ (King of Ithaca) son to take over the Kingdom. In the following years, the mentor was not a protector any more but was a private teacher and a reliable guide [20].

As in this example, it is advised that students at the beginning of their first steps for a new target or occupation can benefit from the experienced individuals’ ideas and suggestions to prepare the path for their future. By doing so, they can soundly decide the most suitable way to reach their aims. Under the circumstances today, if the main aims of education are to raise qualified individuals, this should not only be tried through theory but also involve the students’ self-development. We should try to assure and encourage students that their individual skills and abilities will be of great help in earning their lives. This is how we can eradicate possible risks, such as lack of interest, unwillingness, hatred from school, lack of self-confidence, and not being aware of their abilities in our education system [11].

Besides such risks in schools, the increase in the number of students not attending classes is another problem. Students’ positive or negative experiences, attitudes, and behaviors give an idea about specifying the education level and the quality of schools and the procedures to be followed for development and a higher position. An example to these factors is to investigate student attendance. Skipping school or classes seems to be a fun for the students, and this creates a risk for the education system. Students exhibiting such behaviors and reflecting themselves having a “style” create popularity among the others, and they tend to imitate such manners [1].

When the related issues in literature are overviewed, an old habit is noticed. When attendance problem becomes larger reaching to higher levels as a habit among students or due to other reasons, such as financial problems and psychological factors, they find themselves at a point to leave school [6].

When the data obtained from teachers and students are examined, it is noted that attendance problem originates from lack of interest and emotional behaviors toward students by their families. Besides these reasons, families’ financial and economic problems, which cause

depression, are other effective factors. It has been noticed that the results of this research have similarities with the studies done before [9].

Aküzüm et al. [1] in their study found out other striking points. They emphasized the need for sound communication among teachers and directors, schools, and families. They added that the involved should make plans together to prevent such risks. However, the studies done showed that families were not very eager to take part in such tries. As a result, both teachers and directors blame the families for being a direct factor in irregular attendance of the students.

The participants expressed their understanding of irregular attendance and the inclination to leave school as a result of lack of interest in the subjects, friendships among students, and exhibiting indisciplined behaviors, which decrease student willingness to attend school.

Another basic reason for irregular attendance is the families in which students are forced to work and contribute to their economic problems. The level of teacher dissatisfaction and, as a result, their lack of interest in their students and failure in listening to them cause the students to lose interest in their school life [3, 16].

Another study by Önder [8] showed that the biggest reason for irregular attendance is due to students' individual psychological problems or the groups around them. The common view reached at the end of this study stressed the need for a widespread professional support to minimize or put an end to irregular attendance problem. Apart from this, the following ways are suggested to minimize school-leaving behavior:

1. Apart from teaching, the school should also be a center for extracurricular activities (sports activities, cultural activities, and arts).
2. Guidance should be carried out more effectively and be altered according to new comers' profile.
3. Studies should be done and seminars should be organized to make the involved more aware of and understand financial and moral loss.
4. Not only the school administration but also the Ministry of Education and its units should prepare a common strategic plan and implement it. While doing so, they should ask for support from other units (Civilian Defense, Police) for a detailed service plan.
5. In order to raise family awareness of this issue and assure them about its importance for their children's future life, different methods can be referred to.

In order to fight the risks, likely to emerge in schools, all the involved directors, teachers, and others in education should be well organized and make moves with better understanding of the situation. Every kind of risk likely to be experienced in schools should be born in mind and evaluated. As it has been stated in this study, risk analysis should not only be done in student behavior and psychologies but also in environmental and natural issues, as well as in every field that may have an effect on students. The risks stressed in this study should be specified, a procedure should be adapted, and action plans should be made to minimize risk levels in schools [12].

After all the risk analysis in order to provide contribution to all the elements in the education system and the system itself, public organizations, the press, the TV, radio, the State, and parents should be involved in the process in time and within a plan to fight the problems through an effective strategy. At this point, the contribution of social-media and other communication technologies, which make it easy to reach to individuals in the fastest way, cannot be ignored. Making use of information technologies in relation with the risk-analysis and plans to be implemented will contribute to the process [13]. Did a research in the effect of mass-media tools on students and found out that they spent too much time on these tools and tried to practice what they learnt from them.

The effect of student-oriented risks may be minimized through the use of technology and communication means. Publications and information to warn families about the risks may help them keep their children away from risks. Meanwhile, besides the use of technology in preventing risks, it should not be forgotten that it has the reverse side as well. A big majority of the students have become technology addicted. They take pains to imitate the bad examples performed by the characters in the imaginary world on the Internet or television. Tunç et al. [18] have reached a finding, which indicates that students with disciplinary problems have been affected from the Internet or television, and they tried to imitate the characters to attract the attention of others. This type misbehavior does not only occur in schools but also it can be witnessed in their behavior that they are under the influence of imaginary characters even when they are with their families. In order to prevent such risks, teachers are often in contact with the families, share ideas, and try to encourage students to participate more in social activities.

3. Conclusion

The findings of the research indicated that directors and assistant directors were well aware of risk management. It was noted that schools were able to adapt policies, but inefficient in applying policies and strategies to form school culture. It is argued that adapting school culture, quality, and risk management can be strengthened by developing more policies and strategies.

As long as risks, natural, human or technology oriented, are kept at minimum levels, the community will have good members aware of what they do for themselves and for the community. Individuals growing up with awareness can make their own career plans, which will be an advantage for their family structure in future. Such individuals will, doubtless, teach their children to keep away from risks. Above all, in an education system with minimized risks, the main aim should be to raise qualified and conscious individuals to add new values to the community to achieve its aims. At a minimized risk level, students will feel safer in their steps for their future. In case of any obstacles in their steps, they may receive a mentor's support with proper planning and management and move forward self-confidently. The need for such a support was advocated in a study by Öznacar and Mümtazoğlu [11]. Finally, sound plans, strategies, and management are essential in minimizing risks, and the only way to eradicate risks is to act together as a community.

Author details

Behcet Öznacar

Address all correspondence to: behcet.oznacar@neu.edu.tr

Faculty of Education, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus

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